

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

November 12, 2009

Members Present: Daniel Clapp, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Doris Holden, Rosemary Kofler, Mary Jane Laus, Barbara Sutherland, Juana Trujillo

Absent: Kathy Koplow

Select Board Liaison: Gerry Weiss

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant)

Guests: Barbara Slovin, President of the Friends of the Amherst SC; Shirley Lauder, Vice-President and Assistant Treasurer of the Friends; Eric Magazu

Welcome:

Dan Clapp, Co-Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:07 AM.

Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The minutes of the October 8, 2009 meeting were approved and accepted.

Friends' Treasurer Report:

Doris provided a handout showing \$15,199.01 in the checking account and \$67,059.33 in the investment account. A request for membership donations will go out in the December/January Senior Spirit. Karen reported donations of \$2,250 to date for FY2010 plus some unrecorded solicitations.

Friends' Annual Meeting Update:

Doris announced the new officers of the Friends. Barbara Slovin (President), Shirley Lauder (Vice President and Assistant Treasurer), Doris Holden (Treasurer), Elizabeth Kelly (Clerk). Doris Holden and Rosemary Kofler will be the COA representatives. Wendy Iseman has resigned. There were 25 members at the Annual Meeting.

CONTINUING BUSINESS

Bangs Center/Use of Room 101:

Nancy has no further news on the **Heart Rehab Proposal** associated with Cooley Dickinson Hospital. The idea of a **Warming Center** for the homeless is not going to happen. The **Health Department** will be temporarily moved into the offices across from Room 101 while some reorganization takes place in the Health Department's current space. Larry Shaffer plans to meet with the COA at the December 10 meeting to talk about space at the Bangs.

Gerry spoke about the proposal for a warming center. The Committee on Homelessness has been trying to find a space for a cot shelter but so far area churches have all declined. Thus, just a warming center (no cots) was suggested. Two churches are in consideration. Last winter 6 people needed cot space and were put up in motels. It is estimated there are 12-24 homeless people on a given night. The Committee on Homelessness has money to staff a shelter.

SUB-COMMITTEE UPDATE

Highland Valley Elder Services:

Joan reported. The recent meeting dealt with an update on the audit. The books are in good shape.

Maura added that Statewide there is a waiting list for all home care services. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs is managing it. In order for anyone to be even considered for service, that person must be an active Protective Service Case or must have just been discharged from the hospital or a nursing home – and needs must high. There are now 1200 people on the wait list. It is expected that will rise to 3000 or 4000.

The Emergency Funds Account has about \$7000 remaining. Thirteen people used the funds last year.

Ad Hoc Survey Committee:

Joel reported. Randall Stokes reports that 439 responses (out of 1,100) have been received. That is 39%. Another batch of questionnaires will be mailed out. Dan is concerned that the underserved people will not be adequately represented.

Senior Health Advisory Committee (SHAG):

Dan reported. SHAG members were concerned that the Health Department only requested 300 doses of seasonal flu vaccine for the recent Flu Clinic, and that only 239 doses were received. All doses were given. **Nancy** said the order was based on what was given last year. A makeup clinic was held on November 6 and more vaccine is now available. The Flu Clinic is a Public Health Department program. The Senior Center is always willing to assist them. SHAG members wondered if the Flu Clinic was adequately advertised.

Professor Lisa Raskin attended the SHAG meeting this morning. Maura spoke of Lisa's involvement with elders. Lisa, Professor at Amherst College, teaches a Psychology of Aging course. She matches up each student as a friendly visitor with an elder to develop a relationship. Nancy Beswick and Betsy Young are two students who are helping with that program. All students are now matched up and report very positive experiences.

NEW BUSINESS**Budget Update:**

Gerry said the budget deficit is \$4.3 million this year and the Town share of that is \$1.3 million. Every department must cut their budget by 10% for now but eventually some departments will be cut more than others.

Nancy said that although State revenue is down, the Governor did not take away aid to cities and towns so far. In the beginning of December the Governor may recommend more cuts. The SC FY 11 budget target is \$168,83 (a \$18,763 reduction). Nancy has a hearing on Monday with the Town Manager and Finance Director. She provided a handout showing the on-going reductions over the years. Essentially the only cuts remaining are in personnel. Karen brings in \$26,000 for the Town by scheduling space at Munson. Her position is critical. Nancy does not see how the SC can continue to operate with fewer than 3 full-time personnel. Nancy will recommend at her budget hearing several things. 1) To raise the fees for using space at Munson Library. Fees have not been raised since 2002. 2) To ask the Friends for support money. 3) To sell the van and perhaps buy a smaller van (to transport people, for food pickup, meal delivery, etc).

Conflict of Interest Training:

Nancy said that laws have been strengthened and clarified affecting employees and people on committees such as the COA. The Town Clerk will be sending COA members papers to read and sign. The staff will have to participate in a training.

STAFF REPORTS**Outreach Grant Update:**

Maura received a grant through HVES to work with Juana and Kathy on 'building a community' within Clark House, Ann Whalen and Chestnut Court. They will work with the residents to have them identify programs and activities that would help increase a sense of community within those residences. Wendy Ewald, an artist and teacher at Amherst College, will be working with residents and other students on non-monetary exchanges--exchanging/trading services or bartering amongst residents. It fits in very well with the HVES program of needs and offers. Wendy wants to create a public art display about the project in order to attract public interest. Betsy Young wants to produce a newsletter next semester containing information about the project and ideas for implementation.

Amherst Club Grant Possibility:

Nancy did not get the grant she applied for.

Walmart Grant Possibility:

Nancy mentioned a possible \$1000 grant to help pay for bags for the Wednesday morning Bread Program.

The COA adjourned at 10:37 AM.

The next meeting of the COA will be held on December 10, 2009 at 9:00 AM.

Larry Shaffer asked be on the agenda to speak on space in the Bangs.

Respectfully submitted,
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary

The approved minutes of the October 8, 2009 meeting were delivered to the Select Board Office to be filed.